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Net Work

CBS' Tennis Tourney

By Elisabeth Bumiller

CBS correspondent Morley Safer was watching Stansfield Turner like a hawk. "Have you noticed when they leave the line calls to him," he said, eyeballing the CIA director's tennis game, "that he cheats?"

Turner was unavailable for comment on that one, mostly because he was too busy trying to whack tennis balls down people's throats. Safer, meanwhile, was just sitting around in the clubhouse with Eric Sevareid, who called himself "much too old and feeble" to play.

But Sevareid surfaced last night because the network he's retired from was holding its eighth annual tennis tournament at the Arlington YMCA Tennis and Squash Club. The CBS corporate people, who invite a bunch of congressmen, call it just "a natural, fun thing," while the slightly more cynical CBS newspeople call it your basic lobby party. As Safer puts it: "Tennis as a metaphor for bribery."

And the Washington political celebrities who come perhaps figure that it never hurts to play tennis with someone who might be covering your indictment one of these years. Then, too, the food: "Have you seen," said Sen. Edward Zorinsky (D-Neb.), "what it costs to eat at Jean-Pierre these days?"

Whoops, there's also the tennis. Sixty people play doubles for a trophy that has gone to George Bush twice in past years.

EXCERPT